

Current patch test results with the European baseline series and extensions to it from the European Surveillance System on Contact Allergy network, 2007-2008.

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### Abstract

**Background.** The pattern of contact sensitization to the supposedly most important allergens assembled in the baseline series differs between countries, presumably at least partly because of exposure differences. **Objectives.** To describe the prevalence of contact sensitization to allergens tested in consecutive patients in the years 2007 and 2008, and to discuss possible differences. **Methods.** Data from the 39 departments in 11 European countries comprising the European Surveillance System on Contact Allergy network ([www.essca-dc.org](http://www.essca-dc.org)) in this period have been pooled and analysed according to common standards. **Results.** Patch test results with the European baseline series, and country-specific or department-specific additions to it, obtained in 25 181 patients, showed marked international variation. Metals and fragrances are still the most frequent allergens across Europe. Some allergens tested nationally may be useful future additions to the European baseline series, for example methylisothiazolinone, whereas a few long-term components of the European baseline series, namely primin and clioquinol, no longer warrant routine testing. **Conclusions.** The present analysis points to 'excess' prevalences of specific contact sensitization in some countries, although interpretation must be cautious if only few, and possibly specialized, centres are representing one country. A comparison as presented may help to target in-depth research into possible causes of 'excess' exposure, and/or consideration of methodological issues, including modifications to the baseline series.